

# Foresthill Divide Loop Trail



**Distance:** 8.2 miles; 3.7 hours (hiking)  
Shorter loops are also possible.  
Add 1 mile (0.4 hrs) from Trailhead (West)

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate

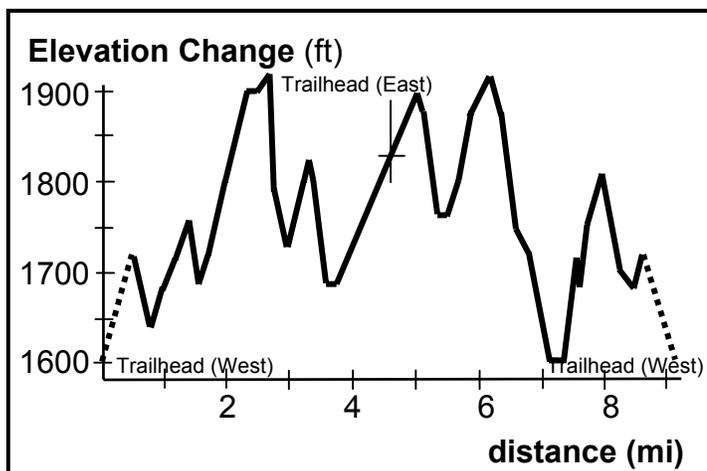
**Slope:** 4% avg; 15% max. (see below)

## Trailhead / Parking

Trailhead (West) is on Foresthill Road, 3.5 miles east of Foresthill Bridge, at a large parking area on the right (known locally as the Grizzly Bear House turnout). Trailhead (East) is on Foresthill Road, 7 miles east of Foresthill Bridge (0.2 mile past Drivers Flat Road) at a large parking area on the left. Both trailheads have a porta-potty.

## Description

*This very well maintained loop is one of the newest trails to open in the ASRA (completed in 2000), and it offers some beautiful views of Lake Clementine and the North and Middle Forks of the American River. Straddling the Foresthill Divide at elevations ranging from 1600 to 1900 ft, it provides a diversity of flora as it passes through all four American River Canyon ecosystems: yellow pine forest, foothill woodland, riparian woodland, and chaparral. It also passes through open grasslands that are abundant with wildflowers in the spring.*



**The Foresthill Divide Loop Trail** offers a quintessential American River Canyon experience for hikers, bikers and equestrians, and it is extremely popular year round. Starting the loop at Trailhead (West) adds one mile to the 8.2-mile loop, but it is the closer trailhead coming from Auburn.

The trail begins at a green gate behind the parking area and then turns left into the shade of oak and foothill pine. About 100 yards east of the parking area, there is an old rock foundation of a hotel nestled in the trees. This hotel served miners during the gold rush era and was called the Grizzly-Bear House, appropriately named because the skin of an enormous grizzly bear was spread out on one of its walls, seeming to take the whole house in its embrace.

The trail soon opens up into large rolling grasslands dotted with majestic oaks and beautiful wildflowers in the spring. At 0.5 mile, turn right at the Drivers Flat marker, which puts you onto the 8.2-mile loop going counter-clockwise. At 1 mile, a side trail to the right leads to an overlook with a magnificent panoramic view of the MF American River from Poverty Bar to the east, to Brown's Bar to the west. This side trail adds 0.8 miles and 200 ft of elevation change.

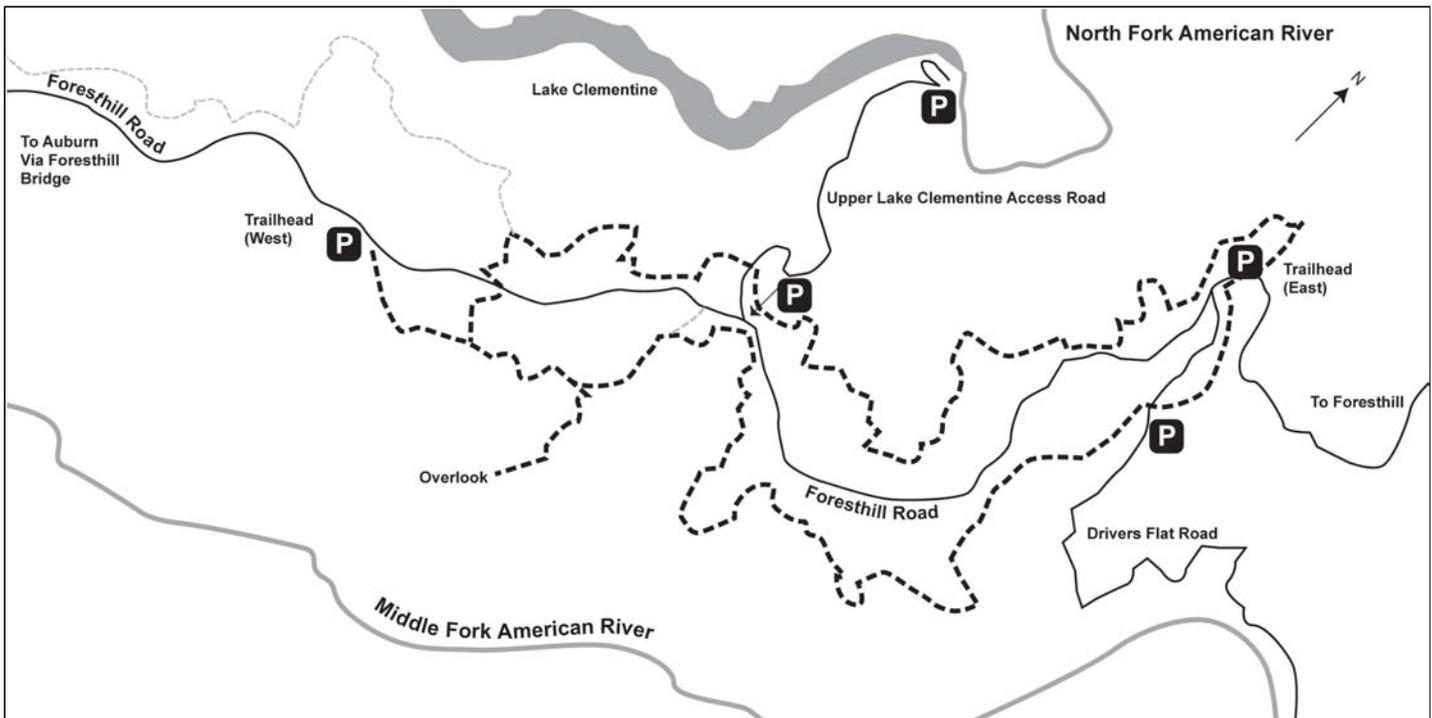
Returning to the loop trail, it meanders in and out of shaded foothill woodlands ecosystem and sunny chaparral dominated by Manzanita, Buck Brush and Chamise. At 1.4 miles, the trail turns right while a dirt road continues straight.

*(Those interested in a shorter, 3.9-mile loop should continue straight on the dirt road; carefully cross Foresthill Road and go right for 200 yards; turn left onto Upper Lake Clementine Road and go 0.2 mi. down the road to find the loop trail again. Turn left on the loop trail and proceed 2 miles to return to Trailhead (West)).*

For those remaining on the 8.2-mile loop, the trail becomes narrower and more scenic from here. At the 2.2-mile point, there is a grand view of the Middle Fork and Cool limestone quarry to

*Continued on back →*





the west. At 3 miles, a well-built, wooden bridge crosses a creek (running in winter and spring). A bit further along, there is a fork in the trail – stay to the left. At 4.1 miles, either continue straight on the loop trail or turn left and proceed up Drivers Flat Rd to Foresthill Rd. Either way, when you get to the road, carefully cross (preferably when no cars are coming) and proceed to the parking lot at Trailhead (East), which marks the halfway point of the 8.2-mile loop trail.

From Trailhead (East), the loop trail continues behind the parking area. It is mostly shaded with no open meadows, passing through dense yellow pine forest and foothill woodlands. The views are less grand on this side of Foresthill Divide, although glimpses of the NF American River and Clementine Lake can sometimes be seen through the trees in the canyon below.

At 1.5 miles from Trailhead (East), there is a great view of Robbers' Roost (a.k.a. Lime Rock) on the far side of Clementine Lake. At 2.5 miles, the loop crosses Upper Lake Clementine Rd.

*(Those starting at Trailhead (East) and looking for a shorter, 6-mile loop: turn left and climb Upper Lake Clementine Rd to Foresthill Rd; turn right and go 200 yards; carefully cross the road and continue on a dirt road behind the green gate; go 150 yds and turn left on the loop trail; proceed 3.3 mi. to return to Trailhead (East)).*

For those remaining on the 8.2-mile loop, cross Upper Lake Clementine Rd, go 3.8 mi. through densely shaded foothill woodlands, and emerge on Foresthill Rd. Carefully cross the road and go 0.2 mi. to a trail intersection. To return to Trailhead (West), turn right and go 0.5 miles. To return to Trailhead (East), go straight for 4.2 miles.

Thank you for visiting the Auburn State Recreation Area. Please take care to preserve and protect the trails, plants, and historic artifacts for other visitors (and for the wild residents of ASRA) by staying on the trail and by packing out all garbage to the trailhead. Some trails are very popular and may be crowded at times with hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Trail courtesy requires that bikers yield to hikers and equestrians, and that hikers yield to equestrians. In order to reduce conflicts and increase everyone's enjoyment, park visitors are required to act in a safe and courteous manner, obeying all park rules and speed limits, and respecting trail designations. **Not all trails are open to all uses. A large print version of this trail guide is available at ASRA Park Headquarters.**

*This trail guide was created by ASRA Canyon Keepers, volunteers who assist the professional Park Rangers by providing information and assistance to ASRA visitors. Canyon Keepers conduct monthly hikes and meetings (open to the public) to learn more about the history and natural beauty of the American River Canyon. They also help maintain and improve hiking trails in ASRA. To learn more about Canyon Keepers, please call 530-885-3776 or click [www.psyber.com/~asra/asrack.htm](http://www.psyber.com/~asra/asrack.htm)*